

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims to read as follows (a marked up version of the amended claims is included in Appendix A). To facilitate prosecution all claims (even those not amended) are shown below:

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1. A load bearing structural element extruded from a thermoplastic plastics material which is compounded so that the element has a flexural modulus of 400 Mpa or above.

2. An element as claimed in claim 1, which has a flexural modulus of 5500 Mpa or above.

A³ 3. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 1, which has a ratio of flexural modulus in Megapascals to density in kg/m³ of at least 2.5:1.

4. An element as claimed in claim 3, wherein said ratio is at least 4.2:1.

A⁴ 5. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 1, which comprises from 30-90 wt% of thermoplastic polymer and 25-50 wt% of an elastic modulus increasing material.

A⁵ 6. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic polymer is polyethylene, polypropylene or polyethylene terephthalate.

7. An element as claimed in claim 6, wherein the thermoplastic polymer is bi-axially oriented polypropylene.

A⁶ Sub 8. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic plastics material is a recycled material.

A⁹

Subcc 9. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 1 which contains glass fibres as an elastic modulus increasing material.

10. An element as claimed in claim 9, wherein the glass fibres have a length of at least 5 mm.

11. An element as claimed in claim 10, wherein the glass fibres have a length of 8-12 mm.

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Subcc 12. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 9 wherein the glass fibres are oriented in planes parallel to a load bearing surface thereof.

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Subcc 13. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 1, which has compounded with the thermoplastic plastics material at least one substance selected from fire retardants, UV stabilisers and/or friction increasers.

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Subcc 14. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 1 which has at least one substance selected from fire retardants, UV stabilisers and/or friction increasers present in an outer layer which has a thickness of up to 1 mm.

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Subcc 15. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 14, wherein the outer layer is formed from thermoplastics material containing the at least one substance and co-extruded with the remainder of the material forming said element.

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Subcc 16. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 1, which has a co-extruded outer layer which has anti-slip character.

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Subcc 17. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 1 wherein the compounded thermoplastic plastics material contains a coupling agent and/or a nucleating agent in amounts of from 1 to 3 wt% and 0.1 to 2 wt% respectively.

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Please add the following new claims:

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18. (New) A method of providing access by foot to a location to which access is required, which comprises locating between a freely accessible location and the location to which access is required so as to be supported in such a way that an unsupported span exists between support positions a platform structure which resists static and/or dynamic loading, characterized in that the platform structure is formed as a thermoplastic plastics extrudate which is compounded so that the structure has a flexural modulus of at least 4000 Mpa.

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19. (New) A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the compounded plastics extrudate has a flexural modulus of 5500 Mpa or above.

20. (New) A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the ratio of flexural modulus in Megapascals to density in kg/m³ of plastics material of the compounded plastics material is at least 2.5:1.

21. (New) A method as claimed in claim 20, wherein said ratio is at least 4.2:1.

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22. (New) A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the compounded plastics extrudate comprises from 30-90 wt% of thermoplastic polymer and 25-50 wt% of an elastic modulus increasing material.

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23. (New) A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the thermoplastic polymer is polyethylene, polypropylene or polyethylene terephthalate.

24. (New) A method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the thermoplastic polymer is bi-axially oriented polypropylene.

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cont
25. (New) A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the thermoplastic plastics material is a recycled material.

26. (New) A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the compounded plastics extrudate contains glass fibres as an elastic modulus increasing material.

27. (New) A method as claimed in claim 26, wherein the glass fibres have a length of at least 5mm.

28. (New) A method as claimed in claim 27, wherein the glass fibres have a length of 8-12 mm.

29. (New) A method as claimed in claim 26, wherein the glass fibres are oriented in planes parallel to a load bearing surface of the compounded plastics extrudate.

30. (New) A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the plastics extrudate has at least one substance selected from fire retardants, UV stabilisers and/or friction increasers compounded therein.

31. (New) A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the compounded plastics extrudate has at least one substance selected from fire retardants, UV stabilisers and/or friction increasers present in an outer layer of the structure which has a thickness of up to 1 mm.

32. (New) A method as claimed in claim 31, wherein the outer layer is formed from thermoplastic plastics material containing the at least one substance and co-extruded with the remainder of the material forming said structure.

33. (New) A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the structure has a co-extruded outer layer which has anti-slip character.

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